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No. 299.

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# T O M M Y

A Short Character Play in One Act

BY  
ETHEL HALE FREEMAN

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PRICE 25 CENTS

NEW YORK  
SAMUEL FRENCH  
PUBLISHER  
28-30 WEST 38TH STREET

LONDON  
SAMUEL FRENCH, LTD.  
26 SOUTHAMPTON STREET  
STRAND

PS635  
Z9 F868



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© Cl.D 39673  
FEB 15 1915  
No 1

TMP92-009312

# TOMMY

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## CHARACTERS.

(In the order of their appearance.)

GRANNIE

MISS BUMSTED (*A state-ward visitor*)

JOHN SNOW

TOMMY

SIDNEY

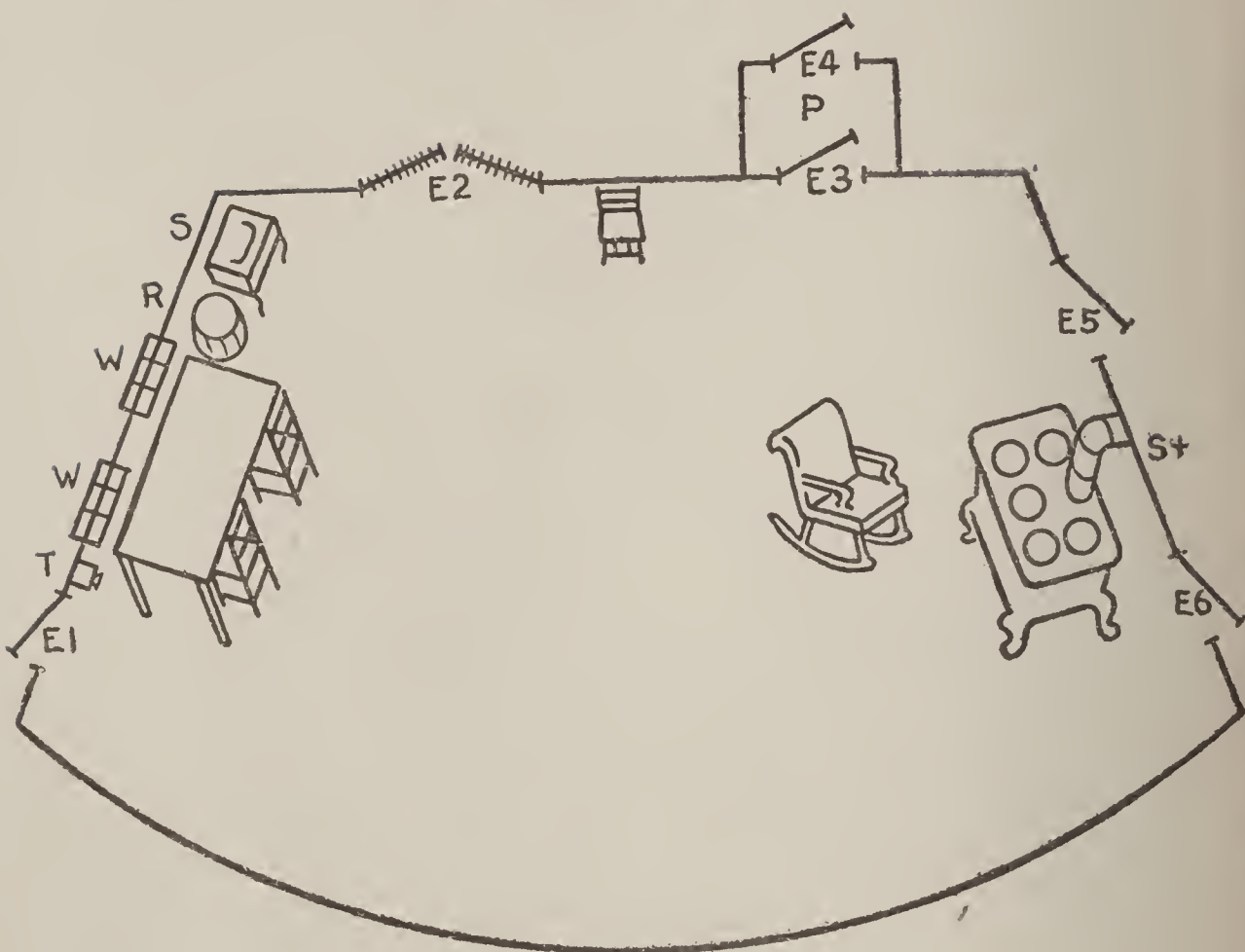
MRS. STILES-HALL

STILES-HALL

MRS. ROCKAWAY

# TOMMY

## [Stage Plan]



- E1 — EXIT TO CLOSET
- E2 — DOUBLE SCREEN DOOR LEADING TO WOOD SHED
- E3 — EXIT TO FRONT PORCH
- E4 — EXIT, FRONT DOOR
- E5 — EXIT TO TOMMY'S ROOM
- E6 — EXIT TO SPARE ROOM
- W — WINDOW, 12 SMALL PANES
- R — BARREL
- S — SINK
- P — PORCH
- S+ — STOVE
- T — TELEPHONE AGAINST WALL

# TOMMY

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SCENE:—GRANNIE's kitchen. *It is a typical kitchen of the old New England farm-house. On the left a large stove fills the place once occupied by a fire-place. At the right an oblong table stands between two windows. The table is covered with white oil-cloth. At one end there are a few dishes, etc., covered over with white mosquito-netting. Above the table, on the right is the sink and a barrel full of water standing beside it. The rear wall is mainly occupied by doors. A large screen-door U. R. and U. R. C. discloses the wood-shed. U. C. the wall is covered with pots and pans, a great coat, an old fowling-piece and several farmer hats. U. L. C. a short entry leads to the front door. There are also doors U. L. and D. L., leading respectively to TOMMY's room and the spare chamber. A telephone occupies D. R.*

*(The scene discovers GRANNIE near the sink, sprinkling clothes. MISS BUMSTED sits rocking near the stove.)*

MISS BUMSTED. Oh, how serene it is here! Like walking on land after a sea-voyage—so firm and still. I'd really like to spend the night and see the child.

GRANNIE. Do, now, Miss Bumsted. You've come such a long ways. And it must be real hard work,

making so many calls in one day. You have to write reports on them, I suppose?

MISS BUMSTED. Yes——

GRANNIE. Well, now, that's hard work for hot weather.

MISS BUMSTED. But I don't have to do any brain work here, and it's a real rest to come. I'm sorry not to see the child, though—happy and healthy as ever, of course?

GRANNIE. Never in the house a minute except to help with the work.

MISS BUMSTED. I can imagine. Just as active as ever?

GRANNIE. (*Stopping her work, and pushing back her spectacles*) Why, you'd think so, Miss Bumsted! When she isn't in the garden—it's the hen yard, or she is off with the cow—she'll stand by the hour just scratching its back!—When the work's done, she just lets loose, it'll be off to the woods, or up in the big pasture, or tramping the Lord knows where. But she's fonder of that cow than anything, and do you know, she has set her heart on having a stock-farm. Talks about it as regular as the rooster crows.

MISS BUMSTED. I'm delighted she's so contented. One would think her parents had been country-bred people.

GRANNIE. I've often thought that way, myself.

MISS BUMSTED. Has Tommy ever heard any more from those relatives—cousins—weren't they? Did she answer that letter?

GRANNIE. No—she said she didn't know any relatives, they'd given her over to the State an' that was enough. She just got mad. Tommy can get mad, but it's mighty seldom she lets go.

MISS BUMSTED. Did she keep the letter?

GRANNIE. (*Chuckling*) In there. (*Points to the stove*) She said, "now they can't prove I ever got it, anyways!" (*Thunder is heard in the distance*)



MISS BUMSTED. Oh, oh! What was that? Was it blasting or thunder, or shooting? (*They listen*) Dear, dear, what luck! Do you think that was thunder?

GRANNIE. It sounded some like it, still——

MISS BUMSTED. (*Getting up*) I must hurry on, but if it should storm you may see me back again, for you know how mortally scared I am. Silly as it is, I cannot help it.

GRANNIE. So you are, there, I remember that storm last season when you dropped in, as limp as a wet rag one minute and as nervous as a chipmunk the next! You poor thing!

MISS BUMSTED. Give me a couple of pillows and a closet—that is all I ask. Perhaps we won't get it—good-bye, good-bye. (*She hastens to front door*)

GRANNIE. (*Following her to the door*) Now you just come back if it does rain.

MISS BUMSTED. Thank you, thank you. But I'll try it, it may have been blasting. Good-bye. (*Exit U. L. C.*)

(GRANNIE stands in the open door-way, for a moment, studying the matter.)

GRANNIE. It does look kind of black. Poor thing, poor thing! (*She returns to the clothes which she now places neatly in a large basket*)

(*A boy's voice calls outside.*)

Grannie, Grannie!

(JOHN SNOW runs in U. L. C.)

GRANNIE. Afternoon, John Snow—what's the matter now?

JOHN SNOW. Where's Tommy?

GRANNIE. Well—is that all! I thought the little bull'd got away.

JOHN SNOW. Oh, no, Granny, I just wanted Tommy.

GRANNIE. Well there's nothing new in that, John Snow. I guess she's up finishing the big berry-bush—she'd ought to be back by now. You'd better sit down an' keep cool.

JOHN SNOW. All right. But just see what I've got for her! Look at this. (*He takes a handkerchief from his pocket and carefully unwraps a pink ticket*)

GRANNIE. What is it?

JOHN SNOW. Tommy's ticket to the show. She's goin' to it with me.

GRANNIE. The show up to Rockaways' Place? (*JOHN SNOW nods*) How much did you hev to pay?

JOHN SNOW. Fifty cents. Couldn't you come, too, Grannie?

GRANNIE. Oh, no, John Snow. I ain't one to go to shows, not to city folks's places.

JOHN SNOW. But the Rockaways are awful nice—I think Sidney is all right—you'd have a fine time.

GRANNIE. No, thank you, Johnnie. You can take Tommy. I don't object to her going—but I'll mind the house an' the animals. One of us would hev to stay back.

JOHN SNOW. Look here, Granny, if one of you was dead an' had to be buried, there wouldn't be anyone to stay back an' mind the house. But I suppose I'd hev to be here, then. (*As he pauses, gloomily, a peal of thunder is heard*)

GRANNIE. Goin' to rain, ain't it?

JOHN SNOW. Guess it is, Grannie. Don't you want some wood? (*He runs to the wood-shed and returns with an armful which he sets down in the box by the stove*) Gee! Won't Tommy be tickled to get wet! Gee! I hope it comes down!

(*A voice outside calls*)

Jessie, Jessie! Here boss, co' boss, co' boss!



(JOHN SNOW darts to the door U. L. C.)

There she is, there she is! (*Exit*) (*Laughing and chatting are heard outside—also the moo of a cow*)

(*Enter TOMMY with JOHN SNOW.*)

TOMMY. Oh, Grannie! Grannie! Isn't John a daisy? He earned enough from his berries to buy me a ticket, and he is going to it with me.

JOHN SNOW. (*Proudly*) Not in a reserved seat, Tommy. You have one of those. Mine is just an admission—Yours is pink and mine is blue—it says “admission to the Rockaway Woods.” Gee!

GRANNIE. I thought your dad wouldn't let you have your berry earnings—ain't he turned over a new leaf, eh?

JOHN SNOW. No—oh no, but this was extra picking.

TOMMY. He got them after supper and sold them to the egg-man. Big as these, weren't they? (*She holds up her pail of blue-berries for the GRANNIE to see*) Wasn't he the boy, Grannie?

GRANNIE. Did you, now, did you—John Snow? Well, sit down and have supper with us.

TOMMY. Oh yes, Johnnie dear, you must. Potatoes and baked beans! Oh, Granny! (*She sniffs about the stove with satisfaction*) My! but I am hungry.

JOHN SNOW. No, no, Tommy, I've got to beat it, or dad'll be mad.

TOMMY. (*Sweetly*) Has he been ugly, again? (*JOHN SNOW nods*) Well, here—(*She forks a potato and holds it out to him—he takes it warily, tries to say thanks in spite of the hot mouthful and goes out U. L. C.* TOMMY follows him to the entry)

TOMMY. Coming back after the chores? (*JOHN SNOW calls “yep” as he disappears. TOMMY goes into the wood-shed and calls after him*) I'll beat you at milking—

JOHN SNOW. (*Outside*) Pooh! I'll get seven!  
(*She returns and takes down the milk-pail*)

GRANNIE. What you been up to to-day, Tommy?

TOMMY. Oh nothing, Grannie.

GRANNIE. Tommy, you ain't been round with the city folks again, I hope——

TOMMY. Hm! Not many of 'em.

GRANNIE. I suppose they don't *have* to fool 'round wastin' time with a country girl if they don't choose to——

TOMMY. Grannie!

GRANNIE. Well?

TOMMY. Do you know what city people say when you look that way? They say, I should——

GRANNIE. Never mind, Tommy.

TOMMY. Worry—an' have wrinkles—That is their way of putting it——

GRANNIE. I don't know as I care a yellow pump-kin what they'd say.

TOMMY. Oh, but you know you do, though. An' so do I. (*She sings*)

“ There was a jolly miller  
Lived on the River Dee.  
He laughed and sang from morn 'till night,  
No man so blithe as he——”

GRANNIE. Fetch the plates, Tommy.

TOMMY.

“ And this the burthen of his song  
And ever more shall be,  
' I care for nobody, no, not one,  
And nobody cares for me.' ”

(*Laughs*) You think you're something like that, Grannie dear, but you're not! Why if Sidney Rock-away was to come in that door now, you'd run to set your cap straight and put on a clean apron an' apologize for the looks o' the kitchen—that never

looked better!—an'—golly-pops! there is Mr. Rock-away, now, well, well, how killing funny!

(SIDNEY, *a handsome, well-dressed fellow stands in the doorway U. L. C. smiling.*)

SIDNEY. Good afternoon, ladies.

TOMMY. Come in, Mr. Rockaway! Come and have supper with us.

GRANNIE. Good afternoon, sir—(*To TOMMY*) Sh! child, there ain't nothing fit for him to eat!

TOMMY. Oh, but isn't there? Better potatoes than you can buy—new ones—hm! an' baked beans,—what do you say?

SIDNEY. You're awfully good, but I only stepped in for a short call—really, Tommy. We have guests now——

TOMMY. Oh, they've come for the party?

SIDNEY. No—but I think they'll stay for it. Tommy, what do you think? (*GRANNIE goes into the pantry—SIDNEY sits besides the window R. C.*)

TOMMY. I don't know, what?

SIDNEY. Of course, mother has heard me speak of "Tommy" pretty often, this summer. Well, to-day, she needed one more boy to act as usher at the party and she asked me if I'd like to have my friend "Tommy." (*TOMMY looks puzzled*) Then I had a sudden burst of virtue and I told her you were not a boy.

(*GRANNIE has entered and caught the last speech.*)

TOMMY. Didn't you ever say I was a girl? Why didn't you?

SIDNEY. (*Avoiding her look*) I don't—know—exactly. But that's all right.

GRANNIE. Eh?

SIDNEY. She certainly was surprised.

GRANNIE. Yes, I presume likely she was! An' I

dare say we'll have a call from her, eh? If she's at all like all the ma's I've ever seen.

SIDNEY. (*Shrugging his shoulders*) She didn't ask where you lived. But I haven't told you about Madelin. She and Charles arrived yesterday. You know, it's most interesting, they are actually hunting for an heiress!

TOMMY. What? Not here in——

SIDNEY. Yes, they are sure she is somewhere about in this neighborhood. You see, Madelin was once very poor and when her sister died, leaving a child to be brought up, Madelin thought she couldn't afford to look after her and turned her over to the state. Personally, I don't think she's very keen on children.

TOMMY. Does she want to find her, now? Why?

SIDNEY. Well, she has suddenly become very penitent, (*The GRANNIE does not hear any of this conversation*) and, incidentally, (*Of course*) something very unexpected has happened—a regular newspaper story. The child's father had an uncle who went to England and never was heard of. Now, that uncle has just died and left a lot of money; and the only heir is this poor little girl. What do you think of that?

TOMMY. (*Who has listened intently*) It's awfully interesting but it scares me, somehow.

SIDNEY. Oh no, dear Tommy, why should it?

TOMMY. Anyway, that money ought to go to the people who brought her up.

SIDNEY. Ah, but if her aunt is very attractive and invites her to live with her——

TOMMY. Please, please don't!

SIDNEY. (*Surprised*) Why I'm sorry, Tom——

GRANNIE. Fetch the eggs, will you, child?

SIDNEY. I must trot off or I'll get wet.

TOMMY. (*Brightly again*) You don't mind that, do you?



SIDNEY. Not a bit! But first let's get the eggs.  
(*They go out together merrily*)

GRANNIE. Can't no good come of it! City folks an' country folks can't mix an' there ain't any use in their trying. He's real nice, too—but 'twouldn't do—not for a minute. (*She shakes her head sadly*)

(*TOMMY and SIDNEY return, laughing and chatting.*)

SIDNEY. Here they are. (*He sets a basket on the table*) Now, good-bye. Remember to come to the party, both of you,—oh, I almost forgot your tickets. (*He takes a packet of cards from his pocket. A peal of thunder is heard*) It is lucky we are not celebrating to-night. Herc are the tickets.

TOMMY. Oh, no, thank you, I've one.

SIDNEY. What?

TOMMY. I have my ticket, and Grannie won't go.

SIDNEY. But surely you're going to let me—why, of course I thought you would let me give you your tickets and they are the very best seats. Please——

TOMMY. Thank you so very much, Mr. Rockaway, but I can't.

SIDNEY. Now, Tommy, that's too bad of you. Please use mine. I'm going to drive down for you, too, if I may.

TOMMY. Oh, no, John Snow has my ticket, and we don't need to ride.

SIDNEY. Can't you explain to John that these are better seats? He wouldn't mind. Why he'd be proud to have you and your grandmother sitting in the very front row. Please, please, Tommy dear.

(*TOMMY goes toward window D. R. troubled, he follows.*)

TOMMY. No, thank you—But you're awful kind, Mr. Rockaway.

SIDNEY. For heaven's sake don't call me Mr. Rockaway and act so formal with me.

TOMMY. I don't think I'll call you Sidney, any more——

SIDNEY. Nonsense, why shouldn't you? Call me Sid, then, see? Now, please change your mind about the party—why you don't know how disappointed I am. Please! Won't you? Good-night. (*Exit*)

GRANNIE and TOMMY. Good-night, good-night.

GRANNIE. I'm real glad you are so sensible, child. (*TOMMY sits thinking hard, her GRANNIE comes to her side*) I guess you know that some stone-walls ain't meant to climb, don't you? It may look as pleasant as a June day on the other side, but velvet lawns an' gravel driveways ain't for us, child—not for us. (*The rain is heard—lightly at first*)

TOMMY. No—anyway, it isn't polite to the Lord to change his land so and smooth it out the way you make a loaf of cake and cover it over with pebbles as though the earth weren't clean. Our land is so much nicer—it's so full of surprises. (*She jumps up and goes out with the milk-pail, whistling*)

GRANNIE. There's good blood an' I don't need to be told it! I wonder who her folks was—I wonder. (*As she stands meditating a knock is heard. It is now pouring hard*)

A MAN'S VOICE. Might I please come in?

GRANNIE. (*Opening the front door*) Good afternoon, sir——

THE MAN. May I step in for a moment, madam?

GRANNIE. Why certainly—dear me! You're as wet as a turtle and in that short time, too. (*He enters cautiously, his boots and hat are dripping—his coat apparently very wet on the shoulders*)

THE MAN. Yes, ah—I shouldn't mind but you see—I got off the road and I really don't know where I am—I came up through some deuced high grass and—as you see—I am wet!

GRANNIE. Well—stop by the stove, sir—there,



make yourself comfortable, sir—that's right. (*He gratefully hurries to the warm stove*) You must have come up through the mowing—however did you get way down there?

THE MAN. I don't know. I was just following the brook——

GRANNIE. Oh, fishing, eh? Get anything? (*He shakes his head*) You'd ought to have waited for the rain—that makes 'em bite.

THE MAN. No, really? I really don't see why it should——

GRANNIE. Makes 'em lively an' n'erves 'em up, they say.

THE MAN. Ah—but the woods are dreadfully damp and chilly in the rain. Your warm stove is far more fascinating, I assure you.

GRANNIE. Maybe you'd like a cup of tea?

THE MAN. Oh, have you really some tea? Oh, thank you, thank you so much—You're so kind. I suppose I am miles from the Manor. Could you tell me the time?

GRANNIE. Nearin' six. Cream an' sugar, sir?

THE MAN. (*Eagerly*) Thank you—thank you. Dear me! A dinner-party on—and here I am, miles away. Ah—I don't suppose you have such a thing as a telephone?

GRANNIE. Right there, sir. Help yourself, sir. (*With many bows and demonstrations of gratitude he goes to it—takes down the receiver and waits. After a little his eye alights on the lines printed over the telephone. He hangs up the receiver, rings the bell, takes down the receiver and continues*) Hello, hello! Give me 29 please—yes—. Hello—is this—yes. This is Mr. Stiles-Hall. Yes—Will you kindly tell the ladies that I am detained—by the storm. They must not expect me at dinner—no I am miles away—very comfortable, yes, indeed,—no, I can't tell you where I am—ah, Madam—can you tell me how far we are from the Rockaway Pines?

GRANNIE. Third house on the right.

THE MAN. Ah—thank you—it's the third house on the right from the Pines—Oh, no—the houses are miles apart, you know—Ah—don't send for me right away, please—no I'm too wet to move. Thank you—good-bye. (*He puts up the receiver*) Ha! I'll just escape the dinner-party. Charlie, my boy, this is good luck—Have I really found a spot where Madelin's ferreting eye can't hit me and where I needn't kill my poor brain with compounding compliments to the homeliest ladies on God's earth!

GRANNIE. Would you like the paper, sir?

THE MAN. Thank you, madam. By thunder, she is fit for the White House—compared with them. (*A lady's voice is heard outside, accompanied by Tommy's*) Good Lord! It can't be! This time I refuse to be brought to account. (*He looks about and then darts into the wood-shed just as the lady and Tommy enter*)

TOMMY. No, you needn't see anyone, we live very quietly. (*The lady's face is hidden by the damp handkerchief which she continually holds before it—as if in great pain*)

LADY. You're an angel. I couldn't go to the house, this way, I simply couldn't—and there's a dinner-party—

TOMMY. Why, you're the lady I met yesterday, up the road.

LADY. (*Moaning*) There! You didn't recognize me. I don't wonder!

GRANNIE. Why, your face is bad, isn't it?

LADY. I know it looks awful and it feels a million times worse—oh, Lord, oh, Lord!

TOMMY. Grannie will fix you—Don't cry.

GRANNIE. Yes, she's poisoned, sure enough—Too bad, too bad! I'll fix a poultice right away.

TOMMY. Didn't I tell you to keep on the road—straight?

LADY. Yes—but I saw a terrible bull coming to-

ward me and I knew how bloodthirsty bulls are—so I got over the wall. I landed in an awful place and then I got caught in the bushes and——

TOMMY. Jinks! It must have been the big thicket. That's full of poison ivy. (*GRANNIE now wraps a poultice over her cheeks and under her chin*)

LADY. Didn't hurt any last night; it came on to-day when I was walking in the sun. Oh, dear—they'd never get over what a fright I look—up at the house—I simply can't go back. Can't I stay here over night? I'll pay whatever you like.

TOMMY. Why you can have my room. Come right in. (*TOMMY takes her off U. L. MR. STILES-HALL comes out cautiously—TOMMY returns—meets him*)

MR. STILES-HALL. Ah—good afternoon—your grand-mother kindly told me——

TOMMY. My, but you're soaking! Why don't you take your shoes off? Put them in back of the stove. Goodness! You'd better get off that coat or you'll get a cough. Been fishing?

MR. STILES-HALL. Yes—ah—I—(*He takes off his boots with some embarrassment. TOMMY quickly puts them near the stove and takes down the great-coat that hangs on the wall*)

TOMMY. Put this on. (*She helps him off with his coat, which sticks, holds the great-coat for him and hangs the other over a chair*) Now—no one would know you. Sit down and get dry. (*He sits in the rocker*)

(*GRANNIE enters with a cup and saucer into which she pours tea.*)

GRANNIE. Here, child, take this in to the lady—(*TOMMY carries it to door—knocks and exit U. L. MR. STILES-HALL is now beginning to doze in the rocker—the newspaper has fallen so as to hide his face. Enter TOMMY*)

TOMMY. I'll do it for you. Did you say 29?

(Crosses to the telephone and calls up 29) Here they are. (MRS. STILES-HALL in a long wrapper of TOMMY'S, her head swathed in the white poultice, crosses to the telephone)

MRS. STILES-HALL. Hello! Is this the Rockaway Pines? Yes—please. Hello, Emma? Emma, I simply can't come home—no—It isn't the rain, don't send for me—no, I don't feel well—no, not at all—no—I don't want to be moved—no, I'm in a nice, warm farm-house. I *think* they'll let me stay a few days, (*Lowering her voice*) then I can find out things—you understand? I say, I may discover where the child is.

TOMMY. It must be the lady Sidney was telling about!

MRS. STILES-HALL. (*Lowering her voice still more*) No—just a girl and her grandmother. What? No, I haven't heard of any Tommy, no—Has Charles come back? Well I guess he's nice and wet, serves him right! Now don't worry in the least about me. Good-bye. I'll call you up to-morrow. Good-bye. (*As she finishes a loud clap of thunder is heard and MISS BUMSTED rushes into the middle of the room*)

MISS BUMSTED. Oh, oh! did you hear that crack! Oh, wasn't that terrible. Where's your closet—Excuse me, ma'am. (MRS. STILES-HALL moves with dignity to another rocker beside the window where GRANNIE places a pillow for her—)

GRANNIE. Well, Miss Bumsted, I thought you'd be back, go right in there, if you'd be happier an' I'll fetch the pillows.

MISS BUMSTED. Oh, thank you, I know it's just ridiculous, but I can't help it, I simply cannot. Ah, this is heavenly! (*She retreats to the closet D. R. GRANNIE brings two pillows from the bed-room, D. L. TOMMY dances up and down clapping her hands*)

TOMMY. Grannie, we've got a hospital—isn't it fun! No—Let's pretend they're been shipwrecked on the front gate. (MISS BUMSTED shut her door



*tight*) Let's dish the supper and feed them all—say, Grannie, (*Whispers*) she's the lady up at Rock-away's that's looking for——

MRS. STILES-HALL. Here, child, tell me what your name is. (*Something in her tone affects TOMMY unpleasantly*) Won't you tell me, my dear?

TOMMY. (*Evading her*) Have some nice hot beans? and potato? (*She brings a tray with several steaming dishes*) Now for the fisherman—no, I won't disturb him. Grandad's coat needs a good many stitches.

MRS. STILES-HALL. (*Glancing toward Mr. STILES-HALL*) Oh, is that your grand-father? (*TOMMY does not hear correctly*)

TOMMY. Yes—the poor man was so wet, I took it down for him.

MRS. STILES-HALL. (*Turning to GRANNIE*) Ah—you don't know of any state children about here, I suppose?

GRANNIE. Why, the town was full of them at one time. They were in every other house for a spell.

MRS. STILES-HALL. Is that so? Did you ever take any? (*TOMMY looks at her quickly*)

TOMMY. Grannie tried it once, but that was all we wanted, wasn't it Grannie? (*She holds up her hands and shakes her head significantly*) She was a case! Sooner or later they get back to the city, don't they, Grannie?

GRANNIE. Yes, they're uncertain—like lima-beans. They may come up all right or you may never hear from them again.

MRS. STILES-HALL. I wonder if you ever knew of one named——(*The thunder has appeared to stop. In the lull MISS BUMSTED has opened her door to get a little fresh air. She catches the last part of the conversation*)

TOMMY. (*With a sudden intense impulse*) Oh, we don't know any of them! We don't have anything to do with them—we——

GRANNIE. Child! (GRANNIE stands D. R. MISS BUMSTED whispers to her and they confer quietly but are overheard by MR. STILES-HALL who has awakened, but still takes refuge behind his paper)

MISS BUMSTED. Who is that woman?

GRANNIE. Just a stranger—she got ivy-poisoned and wanted to stay here till she got better.

MR. STILES-HALL. (Chuckling) If Madelin isn't a guy!

MISS BUMSTED. Don't you let on. I know that type. A woman just like her came into the state-house just last week and——

MRS. STILES-HALL. (Eating with relish) Delicious potatoes, my dear, simply delicious——

MISS BUMSTED. She's so wrapped up I'd never know her, anyway, but she might, for all we know——

MRS. STILES-HALL. What did you say your grand-daughter's name was?

MISS BUMSTED. (MRS. STILES-HALL is now aroused) Don't you tell her! She's as curious as a cow!

GRANNIE. Now that's funny, but I don't recollect your askin', ma'am.

MRS. STILES-HALL. (Laughs nervously) Oh, didn't I? (A pause)

TOMMY. Oh, Miss Bumsted, have some supper, and you, sir? (She brings the tray to each—) Get a little nap? (An auto horn sounds without—some-one knocks—at the same moment there is a terrific peal of thunder, MISS BUMSTED screams and a strange lady enters unceremoniously. She is tall, dark, handsome, finely dressed)

MRS. ROCKAWAY. Excuse me, young lady, that terrific clap made me forget what I was doing.

MRS. STILES-HALL. Emma! How terrible. she'll see me!

MR. STILES-HALL. The deuce! They'll catch me!

MISS BUMSTED. Mrs. Rockaway! What will she think of me!



GRANNIE. Come in, ma'am, I'm sure.

MRS. ROCKAWAY. I think this must be the house I am looking for. Is Mr. Stiles-Hall here?

MRS. STILES-HALL. What! What does she mean?

MR. STILES-HALL. Lord! (*He edges off toward the door D. L.*)

MRS. ROCKAWAY. I was told the third house on the right——

GRANNIE. A strange gentleman did come, ma'am, he—why, where is he, child?

MRS. STILES-HALL. Oh! (*She sees her husband disappear D. L. and starts to speak but checks herself, fearing to be discovered*)

MISS BUMSTED. (*Aside*) Stiles-Hall, that was the name! That was it! (*Tommy looks at Mrs. Rockaway with interest, as though thinking, "Sidney's mother"*)

TOMMY. He went in there. How funny! (*She goes out D. L.*)

MRS. ROCKAWAY. Oh, then, this is the house—Why, Miss Bumsted, is it you? How very fortunate. You are the very person we wish to consult. My friends are in search of a child named Virginia Redding. Have you placed anyone of that name, near here? (*Grannie and Miss Bumsted look at each other in dismay*)

(*Tommy has returned with Mr. Stiles-Hall in the doorway.*)

MISS BUMSTED. I—I think I do know something of the child, Mrs. Rockaway.

MRS. ROCKAWAY. That's good—And how can I find her? (*Tommy starts—*) Ah, Charles—well, you do look the runaway!

MISS BUMSTED. (*Aside to Mrs. Rockaway*) But I am quite sure that the child will not leave her home. She is very satisfactorily placed. If you have any errand to her—I will——

MRS. ROCKAWAY. Oh, no, Miss Bumsted, it must go farther than that. For very pressing reasons, we must see and interview the child——

MR. STILES-HALL. Yes—ah—I shall offer myself as her guardian.

GRANNIE. (*Indignantly*) He! He don't even know how to fish! I guess she could be a better guardian for him!

MRS. ROCKAWAY. Madam, are you connected with this child? (*A pause*)

MR. STILES-HALL. Ladies, excuse me, if I have trespassed on the laws of hospitality—but, very much against my will I overheard this good woman deliver, in very plain language, advice to this other good woman not to allow my wife—and her embarrassing questions to remain in this house——

MRS. ROCKAWAY. Your wife!

MISS BUMSTED. What?

MR. STILES-HALL. Madelin, you may as well display yourself—though I'll hold an umbrella in front of you if you prefer.

MRS. ROCKAWAY. What? What are you saying! (*MADLIN bursts into hysterical sobs. Mrs. Rockaway goes to her in astonishment*) Madelin! Is it really? What has happened to you, my child? Dear me, if it should be small pox! What made you come here? That is why you wouldn't come up to the house. Heavens, you are a fright. (*MADLIN wails again—Mrs. Rockaway tries to comfort her but keeps cautiously as far from her as her demonstrations will allow*)

MR. STILES-HALL. My dear,—your complexion may be of vast importance but I think that the discovery of the heiress may claim some attention.

MADLIN. What? Then I wish you'd discover her.

MR. STILES-HALL. Are your eyes too tired to glance in this direction? I believe, my love, that Virginia Redding stands before you. (*All exclaim*)

MR. STILES-HALL. (*To the GRANNIE*) Although so poor a fisherman—madam—I think I have landed *our niece*,—rather well.

MRS. STILES-HALL. (*Rushing to TOMMY*) Virginia! Oh, my darling Virginia! I've looked for you everywhere—everywhere!

MR. STILES-HALL. (*To himself*) Yes, in Australia the past ten years!

MRS. STILES-HALL. I've written to you—I've been to the state-house——

MISS BUMSTED. I knew it. The very same, and a *cat*!

MRS. STILES-HALL. I've been so worried and ill, fearing something might have happened to you——

MR. STILES-HALL. (*Aside*) To her fortune!

MRS. STILES-HALL. And now at last, Providence—the very hand of Providence has restored you to us, my darling—my dearest——

TOMMY. Excuse me. If I was ever called Virginia Redding, I'm not now. She was given away, I belong to my grandmother.

MR. STILES-HALL. Excuse *me* my dear. She is *not* your grandmother. My wife's mother——

TOMMY. What! You even dare to say that, too? You come in dripping wet to wear our clothes and warm yourselves at our stove only to act like detectives and snobs and even to insult us by trying soft-soap! You know us well—you city folks! May be you think we don't see through every kind of a coat you put on—(MR. STILES-HALL *shudders uncomfortably*) or behind the fashions that you're all bandaged in, (MRS. STILES-HALL *quivers with rage*) don't you know that we are *alive* as well as you? I dare say—through your fine opera-glasses we may look as dull as toads—with as little intelligence or feeling—but—let me ask you, how long do you think I would have stood your insolent questions—or rude remarks—or scornful looks—if I hadn't been given what you must have mislaid, somewhere, in your large

manor-house, a thing called good manners, by the person who—you now say—is no grandmother of mine? I'm forgetting my manners now, I know, but I won't stand for what you're doing. For shame to speak so—and right before her—the loveliest old lady—oh, grannie! (*She runs to her, sobbing*)

MR. STILES-HALL. My dear, my dear, we understand how kind——

TOMMY. Grannie, you didn't think I'd care how many aunts and uncles chased me up—you didn't think I'd care a row of pins for anyone that would try to take me from you!

GRANNIE. There, there, child—you mustn't take on——

MR. STILES-HALL. Your uncle's fortune could scarcely be called a row of pins, five hundred thou——

TOMMY. I don't care!

MRS. STILES-HALL. But it isn't the money, we are thinking of, it is you, dearest Virginia——

TOMMY. I'm not Virginia—I tell you—(*A loud whistle is heard outside—a voice calls "Tommy, Tommy!" and JOHN SNOW runs in*)

JOHN SNOW. Tommy, the lightning struck the big cider-mill! It's burning like a good one.

MRS. ROCKAWAY. Tommy!

JOHN SNOW. Gee! I didn't see all the swells—thunder! (*He dodges behind the stove*)

MRS. ROCKAWAY. Tommy! Is it really? Are you, child? the very child I have been looking for, as well? My dear, now I not only urge you for your own sake, but also for my son's, for Sidney——

MRS. STILES-HALL. What! is this really Sidney's Tommy? Well, this is a miracle!

MRS. ROCKAWAY. My dear, you need time to think the matter over—upon reflection. I am sure that your new advantages will appeal to your calmer judgment. Any friend of my son, would, I trust, welcome every opportunity for education and culture.



MR. STILES-HALL. Come, Emma, there is no point in all this coaxing, it is plainly her duty to come.

MISS BUMSTED. You are misinformed upon that point, Mr. Stiles-Hall, the child will have a free choice. When you recollect that for fourteen years your relationship to your niece has been completely ignored, you may hardly expect that she will receive you kindly.

MRS. ROCKAWAY. Come—let us not press her further, now—we have disturbed this good woman long enough. My dear, I hope you will not treat Sidney as you have your aunt. You must know that he is deeply in love with you; and after giving him encouragement for two months——

MRS. STILES-HALL. Yes, darling, it is for Sidney's sake that we——

TOMMY. (*Flashing*) Two minutes ago you didn't know I had even seen Sidney Rockaway!

MRS. STILES-HALL. Come, come, dear, we guessed, we guessed.

MRS. ROCKAWAY. I assure you, my dear, that he will have my approval and since you have showed him so plainly that you care for him—Come, my dear Madelin, I think it is settled quite properly, quite properly.

TOMMY. You won't even believe that I know my own mind? I'm sorry to have to speak out straight, but, ma'am, we learn that in the country. Mrs. Madelin, if I was *dragged* off by you, I'd run back here the first chance I got and—(*To Mrs. Rockaway*) I'm sorry if your son has thought things I never meant—for they never entered my head—but now that you talk about it, that way, I don't mind telling you that I never can marry him for as soon as I grow up I'm going to marry John Snow.

ALL. What? What? (*Exclamations*) Humph! Jove! etc. (*JOHN SNOW comes out, beaming, from behind the stove*)

JOHN SNOW. Good! Hurrah! Oh, I'm so glad Tommy, how did you ever think of it?

MRS. ROCKAWAY. Well, upon my word!

JOHN SNOW. I never thought of it, but I'll agree with Tommy, whatever she says!

MRS. STILES-HALL. Good Lord. (*The auto horn sounds again*)

SIDNEY'S VOICE. Grannie, grannie, can I come in? (*Enter SIDNEY*) Ah, I thought you would all be here. Mother, I am glad to see you calling here— (*To her*) Isn't Tommy what I told you? Well, Charles, Madelin, I have news for you.

MRS. STILES-HALL. What?

SIDNEY. Yes—prepare—my children—as for an ice-cold plunge, or a giant fire cracker beneath your nose! Prepare, I say for the crumbling of your fairy castle—the crashing of your towering expectations—the heiress is——

MR. and MRS. STILES-HALL. (*Breathless*) What? Quick, tell!

SIDNEY. It's not Virginia Redding, at all, but an excellent young woman named Clordina Upham who was last Monday married to a blacksmith. (*He waves a paper at them*)

ALL. Oh! (*MRS. STILES-HALL wilts, her husband coughs*)

SIDNEY. Come, mother, the dinner-party is waiting. Good-night, Tommy, I've been thinking it over about the party, and I guess you're right. You promised John first.

MRS. STILES-HALL. Oh, dear! That dinner-party, I can't go!

MRS. ROCKAWAY. Nonsense, you can—good-night, Madam; good-night, Miss Tommy, we hope you will both come to the party. Master John, I congratulate you. Miss Bumsted, (*To MISS BUMSTED who has been preparing to resume her travels*) step into the car and we'll drop you wherever you say. Come, Charles.



(MR. STILES-HALL *takes off the long coat and puts on his shoes.*)

TOMMY. (*Taking the coat*) I'm sorry, now, that I was rude.

MR. STILES-HALL. Eh? Oh, don't mention it.

SIDNEY. What has been going on?

MR. STILES-HALL. Never mind. I may be a fool but I never made love to a girl all summer without knowing her name!

SIDNEY. I do know her name. It's Tommy!

(*They go out.*)

TOMMY. How much did you get at milking, Johnnie?

JOHN SNOW. Six and a half, good.

TOMMY. I got seven!

(*They sit down and TOMMY finishes her supper while GRANNIE starts to wash the dishes.*)

JOHNNIE. Are you really going to marry me, Tommy?

TOMMY. Yes, when we're perfectly old. (*He looks at her thoughtfully*)

JOHN SNOW. I'm glad we're not old now—aren't you? (*TOMMY nods and they sip their supper*)

CURTAIN.



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